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# THE IRON SOLDIER

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Official Newsletter of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team

Fort Irwin, Calif.

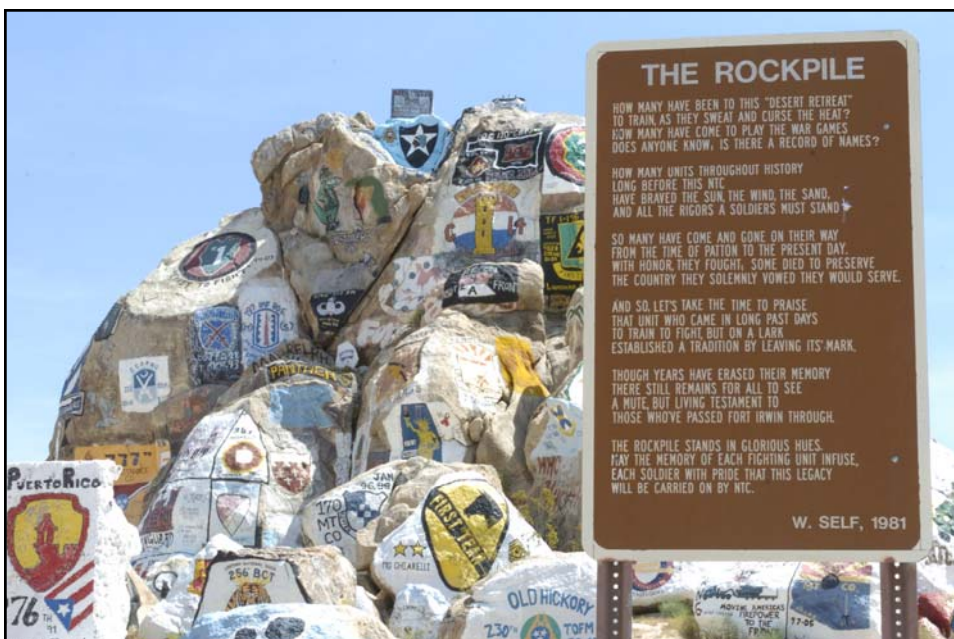
## Welcome to the National Training Center

*By Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scarcaciottoli*

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team is now settling into the National Training Center (NTC) at Ft. Irwin, California. The days and nights spent at the United States Army's largest maneuver training center will be spent honing and refining the skills acquired at Mobilization Center Shelby.

NTC is the perfect training environment for the upcoming mission. The terrain and weather closely mimic the harsh conditions found in Iraq. Though the daytime weather has been moderate, in the low 80's, it could easily spike up to 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher during the rotation.

The biggest test may be the strenuous pace that will need to be maintained by the Soldiers of the 2nd BCT. "We try to turn one day at NTC into three weeks in Iraq," commented Maj. John Clearwater, Public Affairs Officer



for Ft. Irwin Public Affairs Office. The hectic schedule is necessary in order to challenge soldiers with as many situations as possible. But that is not the only goal. "It's up to the soldiers. Their actions will dictate the actions of the insurgents," stated Maj. Clearwater when asked how many scenarios a unit may face during any given rotation.

Just throwing scenarios at soldiers would not give them a sense of the benefits or consequences resulting from the interactions with the Iraqi people.

Another benefit to the NTC rotation is getting to work with attached units and other services. Marines, Sailors and Airmen are all working together under one command.

There will undoubtedly be a learning curve but that's what the next few weeks are all about. Units from four Services, 22 States and Puerto Rico, will all put everything they have learned to the test.

SEE AND READ THE IRON SOLDIER IN VIVID COLOR AT <http://www.dmva.state.pa.us/paarnng/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=442697>

# A MESSAGE FROM IRON 6



COL (P) John L. Gronski  
2/28 BCT Commander

The Iron Soldiers of 2BCT 28ID are now at the National Training Center. We will attack the NTC just as we will attack our mission in theater – with aggressiveness, an offensive spirit, and discipline.

Our Brigade has an awesome reputation and impeccable safety record. We will maintain both here. The training will be realistic and challenging and the environment will be unforgiving, but we will persevere. We will meet all challenges head on. We will learn and in the end we will win.

Training at the NTC gives us an opportunity to put all of our training together. We have the opportunity to sharpen our bayonet to a finer point before going to theater. We have come a long way as a team since mobilization day and we will become even stronger due to this outstanding training opportunity.

We will unleash the force of this Brigade onto the ground of the NTC. We will train as a true joint force as we will have Marines and Air Force operating with us shoulder to shoulder. We are a force to be reckoned with. I am very proud of all of our troops. You are true patriots and true professionals. Our country is made safer due to your sacrifice and dedication.

Iron Soldiers!

## 2BCT Deployment Ceremony

By Capt. Alfred A. Smith

On 23 June 2005, The 2 Brigade Combat Team (2BCT) will mark the second time that the 28th Division has deployed to Camp Shelby. 60 years ago, this September, the Division redeployed to Camp Shelby from the European Theater of Operations, to demobilize after WWII. Now the 2BCT/28th ID(M) mobilizes back to Camp Shelby, Mississippi and will deploy to the Central Command (CENTCOM) Theater of operations.

The 2BCT Deployment Ceremony will be held on June 23, 2005. There will be a Concert on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June. At 1000 hours on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, following the ceremony and after **all weapons** have been turned in, Unit Commanders have the authority to release their soldiers.

The gymnasium across the street from the parade field will open at 6:00 A.M. on June 23, 2005 and offer activities to keep the kids amused until the ceremony begins.

We would like to see as many family members as possible attend the Deployment Ceremony. Families must come in the South Gate and they must have their auto insurance card and registration. Come early, as this could be a long, time consuming process to get in the gate. All vehicles will be directed for parking and shuttle buses will be provided to transport visitors to the concert on the June 22 and to the Deployment Ceremony on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Please follow these vehicle guideline for entering Mobilization Center Shelby. If you plan to arrive on June 22 or earlier it is recommended that you process your vehicle thru the south gate and receive your vehicle pass prior to the 23rd:**

- Enter through South Gate initially and morning of Send Off
- ID needed for everyone in vehicle (military/dependant ID or State issued.
- Children not having ID will be an exception.)
- Drivers License for driver is required
- Current proof of insurance card
- Vehicle Registration
- NO FIREARMS
- Dept of Defense vehicle passes are accepted but MCS still wants to give vehicle pass to help identify as control measure.

Need for Wheel Chair bound vehicles identified at gate when receiving pass. These vehicles will receive Handicap Parking pass. Parking is limited in this area, shuttles will operate from regular parking areas for those that might have limited mobility but not be wheel chair bound.

# WHAT MILITARY WIVES ARE MADE OF...

Submitted by Capt. Richard Hiles - 2/28 S-2

It was just another harried Wednesday afternoon trip to the commissary (grocery store on military bases). My husband was off teaching young men to fly. My daughters were going about their daily activities knowing I would return to them at the appointed time, bearing, among other things, their favorite fruit snacks, frozen pizza, and all the little extras that never had to be written down on a grocery list. My grocery list, by the way, was in my 16-month-old daughter's mouth, and I was lamenting the fact that the next four aisles of needed items would wait while extracting the last of my list from my daughter's mouth, when I nearly ran over an old man.

This man clearly had no appreciation for the fact that I had 45 minutes left to finish the grocery shopping, pick up my 4-year old from tumbling class, and get to school, where my 12-year-old and her carpool mates would be waiting.

I knew men didn't belong in a commissary, and this old guy was no exception. He stood in front of the soap selection staring blankly, as if he'd never had to choose a bar of soap in his life. I was ready to bark an order at him when I realized there was a tear on his face.

Instantly, this grocery aisle roadblock transformed into a human..."Can I help you find something?" I asked. He hesitated, and then told me he was looking for soap.

"Any one in particular?" I continued.

"Well, I'm trying to find my wife's brand of soap." I started to loan him my cell phone to call her when he said, "She died a year ago, and I just want to smell her again."

Chills ran down my spine. I don't think the 22,000-pound Mother of all Bombs could have had the same impact. As tears welled up in my eyes, my half-eaten grocery list didn't seem so important. Neither did fruit snacks or frozen pizza.

I spent the remainder of my time in the commissary that day listening to a man tell the story of how important his wife was to him -- how she took care of their children while he served our country. A retired, decorated World War II pilot who flew missions to protect Americans still needed the protection of a woman who served him at home.

My life was forever changed that day. Every time my husband works too late or leaves before the crack of dawn, I try to remember the sense of importance I felt that day in the commissary.

Some times the monotony of laundry, housecleaning, grocery shopping, and taxi driving leaves military wives feeling empty -- the kind of emptiness that is rarely fulfilled when our husbands come home and don't want to or can't talk about work.

We need to be reminded, at times; of the important role we fill for our family and for our country. Over the years, I've talked a lot about military spouses...how special they are and the price they pay for freedom too. The funny thing is; most military spouses don't consider themselves different from other spouses. They do what they have to do, bound together not by blood or merely friendship, but with a shared spirit whose origin is in the very essence of what love truly is. Is there truly a difference? I think there is. You have to decide for yourself...

Other spouses get married and look forward to building equity in a home and putting down family roots. Military spouses get married and know they'll live in base housing or rent, and their roots must be short so they can be transplanted frequently.

Other spouses decorate a home with flair and personality that will last a lifetime. Military spouses decorate a home with flare tempered with the knowledge that no two base houses have the same size windows or same size rooms.

Curtains have to be flexible and multiple sets are a plus. Furniture must fit like puzzle pieces.

Other spouses have living rooms that are immaculate and seldom used. Military spouses have immaculate living room/dining room combos. The coffee table got a scratch or two moving from Germany, but it still looks pretty good.

Other spouses say goodbye to their spouse for a business trip and know they won't see them for a week. They are lonely, but can survive. Military spouses say good-bye to their deploying spouse and know they won't see them for months, or a year, or longer. They are lonely, but will survive.

Other spouses, when a washer hose blows off, call Maytag and then write a check out for having the hose reconnected. Military spouses have to cut the water off and fix it themselves.

Other spouses get used to saying "hello" to friends they see all the time. Military spouses get used to saying "goodbye" to friends made the last two years.

Other spouses worry about whether their child will be class president next year. Military spouses worry about whether their child will be accepted in yet another school next year and whether that school will be the worst in the city...again.

Other spouses can count on spouse participation in special events...birthdays, anniversaries, concerts, football games, graduation, and even the birth of a child. Military spouses only count on each other; because they realize that the flag has to come first if freedom is to survive. It has to be that way.

Other spouses put up yellow ribbons when the troops are imperiled across the globe and take them down when the troops come home. Military spouses wear yellow ribbons around their hearts and they never go away.

Other spouses worry about being late for mom's Thanksgiving dinner. Military spouses worry about getting back from Japan in time for dad's funeral.

The television program showing an elderly lady putting a card down in front of a long, black wall that has names on it touches other spouses. The card simply says, "Happy Birthday, Sweetheart. You would have been sixty today." A military spouse is the lady with the card, and the wall is the Vietnam Memorial.

I would NEVER say military spouses are better than other spouses. But I will say there is a difference. I will say, without hesitation, that military spouses pay just as high a price for freedom as do their active duty husbands and wives.

Perhaps the price they pay is even higher. Dying in service to our country isn't near as hard as loving someone who has died in service to our country, and having to live without them.

**God bless our military spouses for all they freely give.**



## 2BCT Medics earn top honors

by Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Orr

Spc. Nancy Sue Kramer and Sgt. Joseph Toth recently completed the 91W Combat Medic Course taught at Fort Sam Houston Texas, where they graduated as Distinguished Honor Graduate and Honor Graduate respectively.

Spc. Nancy Kramer, 24 of Herndon, Northumberland County Pennsylvania, was selected as Distinguished Honor Graduate from a class of 52 active and reserve component soldiers. Kramer, who works at the Lebanon Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Lebanon Pa, is a certified nurse assistant specializing in wound and patient care. She has been a member of C Co. 228<sup>th</sup> FSB from Allentown Pa. for six and half years. For her efforts as the Distinguished Honor Graduate, Spc. Kramer received the Army Achievement Medal (AAM) and the respect of nearly 4,000 soldiers that make up the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team (CBT).

Sgt. Joseph Toth, 27, of Allentown Pa. graduated 3<sup>rd</sup> from the same class. He works for an orthopedic surgeon as an X-Ray orthopedic technician and is attached to C Co. 228<sup>th</sup> FSB. Sgt. Toth thought the course was good because it focused on theater specific medical practices. "Other schools just teach from the book. They taught me the stuff I need to know to keep my fellow soldiers alive in the desert" said Toth.

The Combat Medic Course is a very



Spc. Nancy Sue Kramer a resident of Herndon, Pennsylvania, graduated as the Distinguished Honor Graduate from the 91 W Combat Medic Course. Kramer, a member of C Co. 228<sup>th</sup> FSB Allentown, Pa., was awarded the Army Achievement Medal for graduating #1 in her class. Photo by Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jeff Orr



Sgt. Joseph Toth of Allentown, Pa., and a member of C Co. 228<sup>th</sup> FSB, recently graduated from the 9-week 91 W Combat Medic Course which was held in Fort Sam Houston. Toth graduated 3<sup>rd</sup> from a class of 52 active and reserve component soldiers. Picture by Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jeff Orr

challenging and intense 9-week course. The course began on February 14 and the students graduated on April 07, 2005 at Fort Sam Houston. They trained 6 days per week and averaged 10-12 hours per day. Initially, they are taught the curriculum to challenge the National Registry Emergency Medical Technician. Both Kramer and Toth passed the registry and are now certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). The course then puts the student through lurid, intense combat scenario driven training. They learn how to provide medical attention to injured soldiers while under fire. "The care under fire and tactical combat care training was most rewarding for me" Kramer said. "Its practical hands on training that boosted my confidence level and prepared me for things to come. That's what I liked about the course".

Kramer and Toth have been activated for 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' and will soon be applying their medical knowledge in Iraq. They are very proud of their accomplishments and said it was their intention to go to Fort Sam Houston and make the Iron Soldiers of the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (M) "Shine".

Lt. Col. Michael A. Bimler, the 2/28th Brigade Surgeon from said "Its soldiers like Kramer and Toth that make me proud to wear this Keystone. They are going to do great things in Iraq.

## THE WILD DESERT

by Sgt. 1st Class Richard Scariaciottoli - 2/28 Public Affairs

The desert tortoise is cold-blooded. To survive in the desert, the tortoise estimates (remains underground in its burrow) during the hottest times of the day in the summer and hibernates (sleeps underground in its burrow) through the winter. Tortoises come out in the spring to eat grasses and wildflowers and drink water from the spring rains (although they obtain most of their water from the plants they eat). They store water within themselves and use it through the dry months. The adult tortoise can go a year without water.

The Mojave Rattlesnake is often referred to as the "Mojave Green" due to it's dark green color. This serpent has the most potent venom of any rattlesnake in North America. Its poison is

about 16 times more powerful than that of the Sidewinder. They can be identified by their triangular-shaped head and diamond-shaped markings along their body, and of course, rattles. They are brown in color in the lower elevations and darken to a green in the higher regions near the mountains.

Federal law protects many plants and animals on Fort Irwin. While at the National Training Center you will observe coyotes, jackrabbits, ground squirrels and mice. Less noticeable are the bobcats and kit foxes. Fort Irwin boasts many different kinds of birds and reptiles to include rattlesnakes and the endangered desert tortoise. As a general rule **"Leave all of the desert critters alone"**.



# From PA With Love and Support

by Spc. Alissa Skorupa

On April 16, 2005 B Co. 228<sup>th</sup> received a visit from a group organized specifically to support us during our deployment. Four volunteers from the 228<sup>th</sup> Soldier-Family Support Organization, Inc. drove 18 hours from Pennsylvania to deliver cases of water and Gatorade, which had been donated by the community.

The Volunteers delivered nearly 60 cases of water and Gatorade to B Co. "I was excited to see the response to our appeal for donations," said the organization's president Jodi Harkness. "We want the soldiers to know we are here and we care and apparently so does the Scranton Community."

The organization is nonprofit and will be working with our Family Readiness Group to support our needs. "If there is



Family support members that drove 16 hours from Pennsylvania, hand out donated Gatorade and Water to soldiers of the 228th Forward Support Battalion.  
Photo By Capt. Alfred A. Smith

something that the unit or the family members need, we want to know and we'll do whatever we can to accommodate it," advises Harkness of the organizations goals.

The group was met by several soldiers, including some of the company's officers. They were then given a tour of some of Camp Shelby so they could take pictures to post on their website. You can visit the website which is dedicated to our company at [www.228thsoldiersupport.com](http://www.228thsoldiersupport.com).

The organization invites comments, questions, suggestions and assistance from the soldiers and family members.

"We never expected the appreciation and gratitude that we received from the soldiers," Harkness responded. "The gratitude belongs to you (the soldiers). That's why we did this and why we will continue to do whatever we can."

## NO CELL PHONES

by Capt. Alfred A. Smith - 2nd BCT Public Affairs Officer

For Safety reasons, the 2 Brigade Combat Team Command has determined that the use of personal cell phones and non authorized hand-held radios are not allowed at the Forward Operation Bases (FOB's) and training areas of the National Training Center (NTC). Soldiers will be occupying their FOB's and training areas from May 14 through May 27, 2005.

Cell phones and non authorized hand held radios cause a safety problem for our Soldiers by disrupting sensitive electronic equipment that is used during live fire training events and could result in serious injuries to our Soldiers. Live Fire training is extremely critical to increasing the readiness of our Iron Soldiers as they prepare for Iraq.

The daily, high intensity tempo at NTC is designed to be more difficult and challenging than the worst day our Soldiers will experience in Iraq. The training at NTC has been moving along at a fast pace and everyone is learning new tactics, techniques and procedures. Ultimately our Soldiers will be trained to respond to threats intuitively, able to react regardless of the situation in which they might find themselves. The hours have been long, but the soldiers are focused on the task at hand and confident in their capabilities.

Our ultimate goal is to provide a safe and secure environment for your loved

ones while assuring that they receive the best possible training to prepare them for their very important mission in Iraq.



In cases of an emergency, we encourage family members to contact their local chapter of the American Red Cross. Your local American Red Cross

is listed in your local telephone directory. Please provide: Soldier's Full Name, Rank, Social Security Number, and unit assigned. A Red Cross message will be promptly delivered with the utmost confidentiality to your Soldier.

If you need to contact a soldier from the 2 Brigade Combat Team (2 BCT), we encourage you to contact our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at (760) 556-0701. Point of contact at the EOC is SSG Dami. We will communicate your message to your Soldier as soon as possible.

For routine communication and a great morale boost for your soldier, good old fashioned letter writing is encouraged. Mail will be delivered to soldiers stationed in the FOB's.

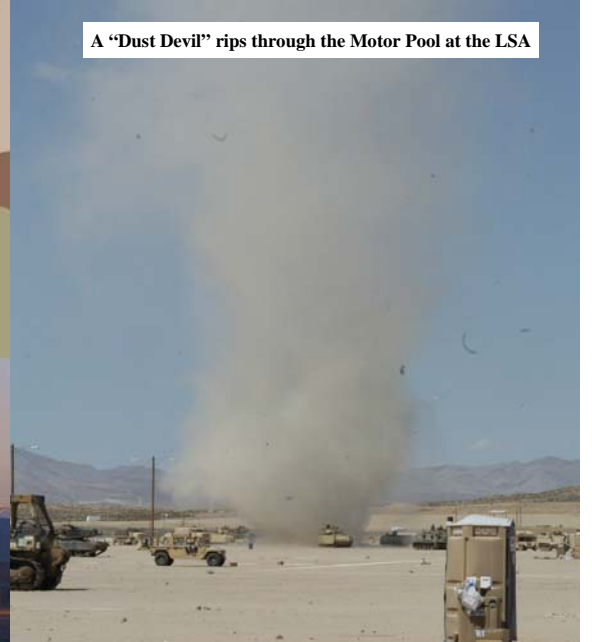
The Address:  
Soldiers Rank & Full Name  
Unit- (Company, Battalion) 2BCT, 28 ID (M)  
Rotation 05- 06  
Ft Irwin, CA 92310 -5000

The more support the families give our soldiers, the more focused our soldiers remain on their job. We are extremely proud of all our Soldiers and thankful for the sacrifices our families are making on behalf of our mission.

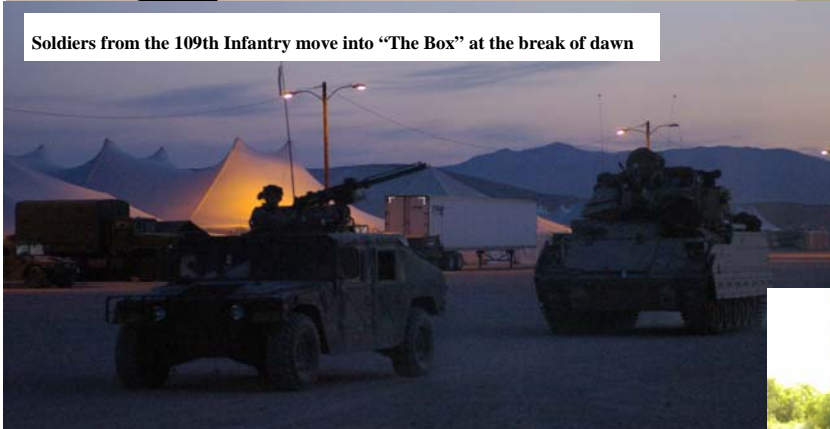




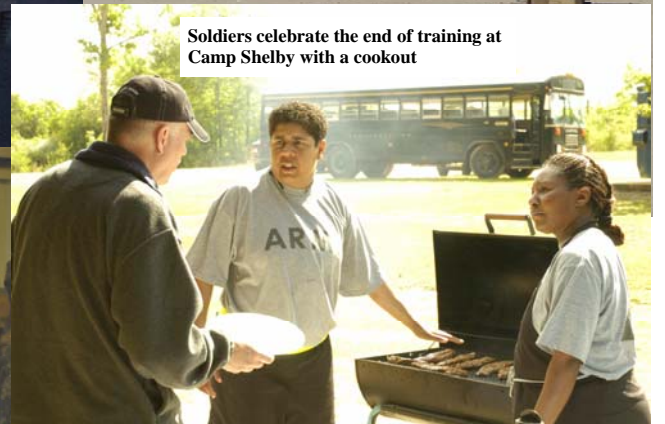
A "Dust Devil" rips through the Motor Pool at the LSA



Soldiers from the 109th Infantry move into "The Box" at the break of dawn



Soldiers celebrate the end of training at Camp Shelby with a cookout



1-110 Infantry Soldiers arrive at NTC



Spec. Cardenez paints a sign that will be going to Iraq



2BCT soldiers arrive at NTC



Send your pics to SFC Scary (Richard.Scaricaciottoli@us.army.mil) Include a brief description and who took the pic.





Sgt. Wolf loads and others loading bags onto the plane for NTC



2nd BCT soldiers on the plane to NTC



Brother and sister Kim and James Calvert team up in the desert



A Marine stands watch during convoy operations



Sgt. Don Hall is promoted to Staff Sgt.



Soldiers enjoy sleeping outside in the cool desert air

# THE SAFETY CORNER

## SEATBELTS AT NTC



Chief Warrant Officer 3  
Joseph Witmer  
Brigade Safety Officer

We are close to completing the hard road to moving to NTC. Our concentration has been to get trained to do our jobs well and come home safely. We have started off well, the NCO corps has done an admiral job keeping bad trends in check and ensuring good habits are being developed. It is rare to see gunners observed traveling above Nametag Defilade. Lets work together keep this trend going and stop soldiers when we see them doing it wrong. Gunners are the most exposed soldiers in a convoy. They MUST make themselves the smallest target possible. Additionally, in the event of a vehicle accident, proper positioning will allow the gunner to drop into the vehicle faster and reduce the injury rate. When targeting or engaging, the gunner should assume the appropriate firing position to fire the weapon. All other times, nametag defilade should be enforced by all leaders.

A very serious issue that I would like to touch on is the use of seatbelts. We have heard many stories and TTPs about the use of seatbelts in country and at NTC, let's put the stories to rest and get the real deal put out. The Brigade Commander's goal of "completing our mission superbly and returning everyone home safely" is what we need to focus on. I have heard the stories of soldiers not wearing seatbelts in country and have watched the death rate and serious injury rate climb.

Recent analysis of the effectiveness of HMMWV seatbelts in OIF accidents show 97% of those soldiers who were wearing a seatbelt during an accident received only minor or no injuries according to the Combat Readiness Center, Ft Rucker, AL. This statistic alone should mandate the wearing of seatbelts for all soldiers.

Col Gronski, your Brigade commander, has put this into perspective for me and I wish to pass his wisdom on to you. The THREAT LEVEL will dictate the posture in the vehicle. Plainly, when traveling in a training environment, the seatbelts will be worn at all times. When on the lanes under the controlled environment, the combat posture can be used based on the training direction from the OCs. Every mission will include a risk assessment completed by the mission commander and will address seatbelt usage.

Lastly (for this article), Rollover Drills. 2/28 BCT has a mixture of vehicle types throughout the Brigade. The number one type of accident leading to the deaths of our personnel are Vehicle Accidents. In Iraq for FY04 to date, 86% of the accident deaths involved a vehicle rolling over in a country where the roads and driving conditions are extremely hazardous. 65% of the Class "A" accidents in country are vehicle related. More than half of those involve a rollover. Rollover drills will be conducted regularly by ALL 2/28 BCT soldiers. At a minimum, patrol / convoy commanders will ensure drills are completed prior to leaving the FOB. Rollover drill cards are now available for every soldier. Use them and train with them.

**ROLL OVER DRILLS WILL SAVE LIVES.**

## 2/28 Goes On a Little Run

by Capt. Joseph H. Baugh Jr. - Camp Shelby PAO Office

With rays of early morning sunlight beginning to peak through Camp Shelby's native pine trees, more than 3,500 soldiers from the 2/28<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team (BCT), headquartered in Washington, Pennsylvania, began forming into a column formation here. "Forward, March" was the command shouted by Col. John Gronski, commander of the 2/28<sup>th</sup> BCT, as he led them on this early morning run.

The run was organized as a final show of "esprit de corps" and unit cohesion among the brigade members as they embark on a rotation through the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, CA before deploying to Iraq this summer.

The brigade snaked through the MCS cantonment area at double time, en-route to the Camp Shelby parade field. Greeted by loud patriotic music, the units began to file into the parade field where they gathered into a horse-shoe formation around their commander.

"2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade is fit to fight", said Gronski, as he addressed his troops after the motivational run. Gronski finished by saying; "Take this opportunity to look around you before you leave." Shake hands with those soldiers to your left, right, front, and rear and know that we're a team."



Soldiers from the 1-172 Armor run along Lee Street at Camp Shelby MS, during the 2nd Brigade Combat Team Brigade Run.

Photo by Capt. Alfred A. Smith.



# Express Yourself

*By Spc. Melaine Kline - HHC 2/28 Military Police*

I had the chance to take a tour through the Camp Shelby military museum not too long ago. Like many other military museums, this one had a piece of history from each war up to the present day. However, in this one I found something that I thought was unique and very interesting. I found a Flag that was encased in glass and that I had seen many times before but never really knew the history behind it. Many of us from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team and our Families were handed these flags in Washington, PA before heading to Camp Shelby. It is the "Mothers Flag." At the museum they provided this piece of history and a poem called "The Service Flag" by William Herschell that dates back to World War One that I would like to share now.

The Service flag, commonly known as the "Mothers Flag," was first displayed at the homes of American Families to honor their sons and daughters that were serving their nation in the First World War. Each blue star represented one family member at war. Gold stars indicated a family member was killed while in service.

## **The Service Flag--**

DEAR little flag in the window there,  
Hung with a tear and a woman's prayer;  
Child of Old Glory, born with a star--  
Oh, what a wonderful flag you are!

Blue is your star in its field of white,  
Dipped in the red that was born of fight;  
Born of the blood that our forbears shed  
To raise your mother, the Flag, o'erhead.

And now you've come, in this frenzied day,  
To speak from a window--to speak and say  
"I am the voice of a soldier-son  
Gone to be gone till the victory's won.

"I am the flag of the Service, sir;  
The flag of his mother--I speak for her  
Who stands by my window and waits and fears,  
But hides from the others her unwept tears.

"I am the flag of the wives who wait  
For the safe return of a martial mate,  
A mate gone forth where the war god thrives  
To save from sacrifice other men's wives.

"I am the flag of the sweethearts true;  
The often un-thought of--the sisters, too;  
I am the flag of a mother's son  
And won't come down till the victory's won

Dear little flag in the window there.  
Hung with a tear and a woman's prayer;  
Child of Old Glory, born with a star--  
Oh, what wonderful flag you are!



*Dana Cole of Washington, PA displays the Service Flag that she will be flying for her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Shane Cole who is deploying with the HHC 2/28 BCT.*

*Photo by Capt. Alfred A. Smith*

## RELIGIOUS SERVICES SCHEDULE

Religious services will be held while in the field as the tactical situation allows.

Express yourself through our newsletter @ (Richard.Scaricaciottoli@us.army.mil)

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# HISTORY OF THE BRIGADE

## NOT THE FIRST TIME

by Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scariaciottoli - 2nd Brigade Public Affairs

A lot of the soldiers going to Iraq with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team (2BCT) have been to the National Training Center (NTC) at some time in their career. For the 104<sup>th</sup> U.S. Cavalry out of Philadelphia that time was July 2001.

Training at NTC was much different at that time. Large scale tank formations moved against each other until they were entangled in a Cold War era mêlée.

Scouts and Tankers from the 104<sup>th</sup> Cavalry augmented the 11<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) and participated in several large scale battles. The Cav rode around in OPFOR Surrogate Vehicles (OSVs), set up ambushes, established Observation Posts (OP's) and many other types of operations. Some of the Troopers had the opportunity to work with the 11<sup>th</sup> ACR's Division Reconnaissance Teams. These soldiers went into the box early, air lifted into their sector and spent several days living in the mountains of NTC so that they could observe every movement of the "Blue Force."

The days were long and hot but the train-

ing was some of the best that the 104<sup>th</sup> Cav had ever received. Nobody could have known that just two short months later, the world and the way that NTC conducts training would be forever changed.

There are several members of the Cav going to Iraq that were present back in July of 2001. As they roll through the sand today they will find that small towns and Forward Operations Bases (FOBs) have grown. They will not fight a large scale battle but will hunt down a small number of Insurgents hiding among hundreds of civilians, all a result of the new way that war is fought today.

One of the most notable icons of NTC is

"Painted Rock." Like hundreds of other units before, towards the end of the Squadron's three week rotation at NTC, some of the Troopers got together and painted one of the large rocks to mark their time spent at NTC. A large red Keystone with the units crest in the center can still be found at the base of the large formation of rocks.



The 28th Infantry Divisions Keystone with and centered Unit Crest of the 104th U.S. Cavalry painted on the base of the largest formation of rocks at "Painted Rock" at NTC.  
Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scariaciottoli

## Have a story or picture for the Iron Soldiers?



Contributions from all soldiers throughout the 2nd Brigade Combat Team are encouraged for consideration. Please enclose a detailed description of the people (name, rank and unit) and subject matter for each story and photo. Include your name, unit and contact information.

Contact your unit Public Affairs Rep located on the left side of this page or send an email to

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